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In those days

Ella Boldry Hallock

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IN THOSE DAYS



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EVERYCHILD'S SERIES

0

IN THOSE DAYS

A STORY OF CHILD LIFE LONG AGO

BY

ELLA B. HALLOCK

AUTHOR OF "SOME LIVING THINGS," "FIRST LESSONS IN
PHYSIOLOGY," "STUDIES IN BROWNING," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

FLORENCE CHOATE AND ELIZABETH CURTIS

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**IN MEMORY OF
THE ONE
WHO TOLD THE STORIES**

THE STORIES

"OH, if I had only been little when Grandma was little!" were the words heard over and over again from a little six-year-old girl who was visiting her grandmother. Every day, nearly, Grandma had told her namesake stories about when she was a little girl — how she looked, how she worked, studied, and played — until Phœbe had wished with all her heart that she could have lived and played with Grandma long, long ago.

Grandma's stories were better than fairy stories. Phœbe didn't have to "play they were so"; they were "really and truly" stories. Sometimes, "somebody else" besides Phœbe heard them, and this was the way they were told.

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Little Phoebe of Long Ago



I

OLD-FASHIONED PHŒBE

ONE stormy afternoon, in late winter, Grandma and Phœbe were sitting together in the big rocker by the old Franklin stove. The wind sang down the chimney the same old tune that it had sung for fifty years and more.

The two little girls, one five and the other eighty-five, sat very comfortably side by side in the chair, as they often did when alone. Phœbe held her "afternoon doll," an old wax one that had been her mother's. Grandma

had been singing some of the old songs, Phoebe's favorites, of course. Now Phoebe joined in the chorus of one, and the two sweet voices sang together :

“Then lay down the shovel and the hoe,
Hang up the fiddle and the bow !
For there's no more work for poor old Ned,
He's gone where the good darkies go.”

“That's the last,” said Phoebe, who knew the program well. She snuggled down still more comfortably in a hollow of the chair, and Grandma knew, too, that the second part of the program was coming. “This is one of our cozy times, isn't it, Grandma ? Now let's talk.”

Grandma smiled. There was but one thing to talk about at these cozy times. The two playmates had been together long enough for Phoebe to find out what treasures of stories were locked away in Grandma's keeping, and “somebody else” knew also that in the little girl's keeping was the key that unlocked them,

and that was — her love for Grandma and her stories. Much like many old-fashioned treasures, indeed, were these stories — like bits of glass and shells and beads, that, when taken out, were found strung together on a very slender thread. But the thread was of little importance to Grandma or Phoebe. Grandma might ramble to her heart's content in telling the stories, Phoebe might interrupt at any point, the stories might go on and on and finally stop — not end — and nobody found any fault. Phoebe was always interested, and Grandma, patient and happy. So on this afternoon, the words had only to be spoken, "Tell me about when you were a little girl," and Grandma, too, settled herself comfortably in the chair, a look of perfect content came over her face, and she was ready once more to open her precious storehouse.

"About when I was a little girl," she said, thinking. "I have told you a good many stories about when I was a little girl, and you

have wished and wished that you had been little with Grandma, but I don't believe you have any idea of what a queer-looking little girl I was. You certainly ought to know how I looked and dressed — why, I'll show you how I looked," and Grandma had a new idea. She whispered something in Phoebe's ear.

"Oh, do it, do it! that will be splendid!" cried Phoebe, delighted at the prospect of two good things — a story and something else even better.

"I was a little 'brownie' girl in real earnest," Grandma began, "brown from head to foot — brown hair, brown eyes, brown skin, and brown dress."

"That was nice, Grandma, everything matched — and you had a big brown bow on your hair, m-m?" Phoebe nodded "yes."

Grandma shook her head. "No, indeed — no big bow nor little bow in those days. My hair was cropped off in my neck like yours, only we didn't call it a 'Dutch cut,' and it

didn't take the barber an hour to trim off the ends. A bowl was put over my head and the ends of hair that stuck out from under it were trimmed off as quick and as slick as a wink."

Grandma reached for a little Chinese cup that stood on the mantel, put it over the doll's head, and in three seconds, to Phoebe's surprise and joy, three clips from the scissors made dolly with her matted hair look as neat as the two little Phœbes, one of long ago and one sitting in the big chair.

Snipping the raggedy ends of an old doll's hair was a daring act, and only Grandma might do it. She went quietly on, "I wore my hair parted like dolly's, and then it was put back smoothly behind my ears."

"Like Froebel's — in the kindergarten — don't you know, Grandma?" Phoebe interrupted.

Yes, Grandma knew about Froebel — thanks to Phoebe — and "somebody else" knew, too, that more than the part in Grand-

ma's hair was like the teacher who loved and understood children.

"Then you weren't pretty, Grandma?"

"Who said I wasn't pretty?" asked Grandma, quickly. "I can tell you one thing," she said solemnly, shaking her head, "I looked like you. My nose was just like yours and like this doll's" — the latter had been nibbled by a mouse. "Once somebody called my nose a 'genuine flat nose'! After that I took special pride in my nose and always called it 'my jimnified flat nose.' Even when I fell and bumped it, I cried at the top of my voice: 'Mother, I've hurt my jimnified flat nose!' A long name for a short nose, wasn't it?" and Grandma snipped off Phoebe's little nose as the Blackbird snipped off the Maid's.

There was a merry laugh, then Grandma said: "Listen, now, and I'll tell you what I wore."

"I know what you wore," said Phoebe, al-

ways ready to tell what she knew ; “you wore pantaloons.”

Grandma’s mouth opened and shut with astonishment. Then she said : “Oh, you mean pantalets !”

“Yes, that is what I mean,” and to Grandma’s surprise, the knowing little girl told how she had made pantalets one day out of paper bags and tied them on below her knees — “not really and truly ones,” she admitted, “but they were too funny for anything ; they went flip-flap, flip-flap ! and everybody laughed.”

“Probably,” said Grandma ; “but nobody laughed at the kind I wore ;” and she described the “really and truly” pantalets : how they were made very neatly out of cloth like her dresses or out of yellow nankeen, with a plain hem in the bottom, how they reached to the ankles and were sometimes fastened with the garters just below the knee.

Phoebe looked sober. “They must have

been dreadful, Grandma. You didn't wear them before people, really, did you?"

"Really I did," was the prompt reply. "No little girl in those days was ever seen without pantalets. They were no more dreadful than your short dresses. What would my mother have said in those days to have seen you with your long legs sticking out of a skirt that came only to your knees? But then — whatever is the fashion is all right."

Grandma laid her hand softly on Phœbe's red cashmere dress. "We had no such dresses as this when I was little. Oh, how coarse and homely they seem now! In the winter, they were made of homespun flannel, dyed black or brown" — Grandma was thinking and smiling — "I helped bake the pancakes and spattered my dress with batter — oh, oh, how it did look sometimes! In the summer time, I wore linen dresses, made out of dark blue, — dye-tub blue — or homely red, homespun linen; that is, linen that we spun

and wove ourselves. You never saw anybody spin or weave, did you?"

"Only spiders," was the answer.

Again Grandma's lips opened and shut rapidly, as if she were saying a great deal more than Phœbe heard. "Spiders! I believe children nowadays know more about spiders than they do about housekeeping. Sometime, when it gets warmer, I'll take you up garret, and show you a few things that you ought to know about."

"About spiders?" asked Phœbe, who had found once for her teacher a "nice big one" in the garret.

"About spinning wheels," said Grandma, shortly. "Oh, well," she added cheerfully, "it's all right; times are different. But the dresses," she said, holding fast to the thread of her story and the little pieces of nankeen that she was busily sewing on now — "they surely went with the times, with open fireplaces and cold houses. The coarse woolen

kept us warm and dry in the winter, and such stuff for dresses was as good as a fireguard around the open fireplace." What did Grandma mean by that?

Then she told a little story of how she was sitting once in a low chair in front of the fireplace, listening, always listening, as still as a mouse, while older people talked, and watching, for her sole amusement, as children never grew tired of watching in those days, the sparks as they snapped and flew from the great fire on the hearth. The things she saw in the fire grew more and more wonderful, until everything else was forgotten, and the little firewatcher was sound asleep. "I heard some one far, far off say: 'What's burning?'" I opened my eyes to look again at the beautiful fire, and there were the women on the floor around me, crushing my woolen dress in their hands to put out the fire that was slowly creeping around several holes. This was the only fire drill we knew. Nobody seemed

afraid of fire in those days. It was a simple thing to stop woolen from burning."

"You weren't scared?" asked Phœbe.

"Not a bit. The only thing that troubled me was the thought that I should have to wear a patched dress until it was worn out. So you see the coarse woolen dresses were all right."

Phœbe nodded. "You always say that about everything."

"All right then, — and all right now, I suppose," added Grandma, doubtfully. "Things do seem just upside down. Look at your waist — it is longer than your skirt. Think of it — a French waist, indeed! Mine came just below my arms, while my skirt reached almost to my ankles."

"My! what a little dumpy waist!" said Phœbe, hunching hers up.

"Dumpy, or not, it was the fashion and I wore it. It was tied together at the back with strings of twisted yarn. What would we

have done in those days without yarn?" Then Grandma rambled off on the uses of yarn.

"Our first knitting lesson," she said, "was making our garters out of yarn. Wasn't this the slowest work that was ever invented for little fingers? You never will know



about it. Woe to the little Miss that lost her garter! Then our stockings—oh, dear! how they did scratch! You would think they were funny, too. They were knit usually out of coarse woolen yarn and then dyed blue. If we wanted them to look fancy, we tied

peas or beans here and there in the legs of the stockings, winding the string very tight. Then when the stockings were dyed, there were white rings where the strings had been tied. Sometimes the skeins of yarn were braided before they were dyed, and then the stockings were speckled and clouded with white.

“And our shoes,” said Grandma, pointing to the soft little shoes in front of her — “well, they were shoes, and that is all you can say of them. They were made out of calfskin from calves raised on our own farm. Once a year, the cobbler came to ‘whip the cat’ —”

“What did he do that for?” Phoebe cried out, sitting up very straight.

Grandma laughed. “I thought you would wake up. Well, Pussy wasn’t hurt, so you needn’t worry. I don’t know why they said it, but people in those days always spoke of the cobbler’s work or of the tailor’s as ‘whipping the cat.’”

“Tell me about the cobble-er,” said Phoebe, looking relieved. “Was he nice?”

Grandma talked for a few minutes about the cobbler. Every cobbler she ever knew was kind and gentle and patient. He came once a year with his kit of tools and sat in the kitchen by the fireplace, staying weeks, or until he had made boots and shoes enough to last the family a year. The children loved to watch him, and pestered the life out of him for shoestrings. “What a knack it was,” she said, “just the making of a shoestring. He cut out a piece of leather as big as the top of this little cup, started an end of the string, drew it through a notch in his board, laid his knife across it and pulled. The leather whirled, and the string came. Then he wet it and rolled it under his foot — didn’t he have big feet! — and there was the string, round and smooth.

“Suppose you had only two pairs of shoes a year and your feet were growing all the time,

what kind of shoes do you think they would have to be?"

"Plumpier than these," said Phoebe, wiggling her toes.

"Yes, plumpier than any shoes you will ever see, but I could run in them like the wind — even the boys couldn't beat me racing. For some reason or another Mother wouldn't often let me go barefooted, but she did once in a while, and then how I loved the feeling of the tall wet grass — just as you do. Once when I was down in the meadow, I felt something on my feet that was colder than the grass. I looked down, and there was Mr. Black Snake crawling over my bare feet."

Phoebe gave only an appreciative grunt. Thanks to a wonderful teacher, snakes and mice and spiders had been made as interesting as any other living things to the little pupil.

"I didn't say anything to him nor he to me, and on he went," said Grandma, wisely add-

ing, "if you don't want anything to hurt you, leave it alone.

"And now our heads," she said, taking another fresh start — "I had a quilted hood for winter, with the front turned back to show the lining. Once in a while a hood had a pretty lining, and that was something to be proud of. In the summer, I had a stiff sunbonnet with pasteboard slats in it — and I wore it, too. There was no going bareheaded in those days, and there were pretty complexions then, such as we don't often see now. For best, I had a white sunbonnet with cords run in it and a high shirred crown. I had, too, a little Shaker bonnet with a green barege cape."

Phoebe nodded, "I saw them."

Grandma looked surprised — "Where?"

"Up garret, in a big hatbox — it was all covered with wallpaper — the box was."

Truly there was nothing hid that those sharp eyes didn't find out. "I am glad you know so much," said Grandma. "Now, when

you talk about being little with Grandma, you'll know just how you would have looked." She took off the old silk dress from the doll and glanced quizzically at Phoebe. "Are you sure you would like to have been little with Grandma?"

Phoebe hesitated. "Were all the little girls old-fashioned then, all of them?"

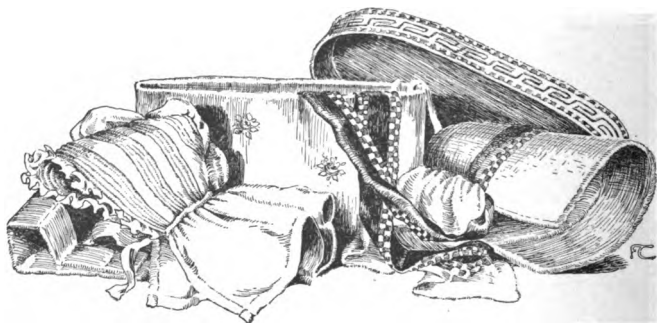
Grandma looked amused. "I see which way the wind is blowing. You want to keep your short skirt and long waist and big bow and then go back and have my good times. Well, you wouldn't have them in *that* dress. Nobody that dressed as I did was old-fashioned, she was *in* the fashion, and you would be *out* of it, and so funny looking, that everybody would laugh at you. Maybe you don't want an old-fashioned doll?"

Instantly all doubt on that point vanished. Two little hands were clasped, and Phoebe solemnly declared: "I do. An old-fashioned doll would — would — would tickle me now

and for all time !” and all doubt vanished also as to whether or not the doll would be hers.

Hand in hand the two playmates went upstairs together to find some pieces of home-spun cloth, Phœbe telling the doll she should have an old-fashioned name and an old-fashioned dress. Grandma knew that that day was the twelfth of February, and as the two reached the upper landing, “somebody else” heard her say : “I have been reading to-day about the mother of one of the greatest men that ever lived. We’ll name this dolly after her.”

I wonder what they named the old-fashioned doll — do you know ?





II

GRANDMA'S DOLLS

GRANDMA and Phoebe were having another of their cozy times. Grandma was resting. She sat on the lounge among the dolls of Phoebe's big family. Phoebe sat in her little chair near by, and they were all having a lunch of the cunningest little gingersnaps, such as Grandma always kept in the house when Phoebe was with her.

"This is Brass Dolly," said the little mother, beginning to introduce her children. "She is awfully naughty sometimes."

"She looks as if she might have been a trial."

Poor Brass Dolly ! Her brass head, bruised, battered, and wigless, showed the shocks of Phœbe's baby days, but she was the best-loved child of all.

"Why don't you talk to her, if she is so naughty?" asked Grandma.

"Oh, I do, but she talks right on ahead of me all the time. She wants to be good, but she can't keep still."

"Poor child!" said Grandma.

"This is Dorfy Dolly, named after Dorfy."

"Oh, Dorothy!"

"This is Red Riding-Hood. She isn't afraid of anything. She goes to the woods and talks to wolves."

"She likes that Indian, too, I suppose," said Grandma, pointing to a little red man.

"Oh, yes, he's a good Indian — he's Hia-waffa. He prowls around all the time and wants to play football.

"This is Boy-Blue. He loses everything. He lost his wig and he lost his shoes and I

have to keep his hat tied on tight so he won't lose his head."

"He's the one that lost his sheep," said Grandma, repeating:—

"‘Come, little Boy-Blue, blow up your horn,’ and now I think he has lost himself, for his face looks one way and his feet point another." Phoebe gave his wabbling joints a twist.

"This is Boston Dolly. She is very proud of her red shoes."

"Is she?" said Grandma. "Well, dollies are dollies, even in Boston."

"This is Rob Roy, my Scotch dolly, and this," said Phoebe with a flourish, "is Nancy Hanks."

Grandma made a low bow.

"This is Lucy Dolly, in pink. This is Baby Dolly—she is the biggest one of all and wears my baby dresses. This is Madeline Meffodist—"

"Mercy! what a name!" said Grandma, forgetting her politeness.

"Yes, she came from the Meffodist fair, and I like Madeline Miller, 'cause she has long hair. So I call her Madeline Meffodist.

"This is Foxy Grandpa — he's awfully old. This is Alice Roosevelt — she's my stylish dolly. This is Topsy Turvy — she does all the house cleaning and fires things around."

"Fires ?."

"Yes, that's what Papa says we do when we clean house. There, those are all the dolls I have here, but I have more at home."

"Well, Phoebe," said Grandma, drawing a long breath, "I think you have an old-fashioned family in size, if not in names. What would I have said just to have seen such a lot of dolls when I was a little girl ?"

"Didn't you have a lot of dolls ?"

"Dolls ! never at any time *dolls*, but I had a doll, *one* doll, at two different times in my life. Such dolls !" Grandma was thinking.

"Oh, tell me about them, will you ?" Phoebe hitched her chair a little nearer and

sat up very straight, that not one word about "dolls" might be lost. "Sh-h! Keep still!" and she shook her finger at her well-behaved family.

"My first doll," said Grandma, introducing now her small family, "was a Sunday doll."

"A Sunday doll — what kind of a doll was that? Did you play with it on Sunday?"

"No, indeed; hardly on week days."

"Did you find it on Sunday, like Black-Man-Friday?" was the next guess.

Grandma nodded her head. "That is pretty nearly right. It was made for me on Sunday — yes, on Sunday, and if you ever find a little girl who is five years old and has never had a doll, I want you to give her one right away, whether it is on Sunday or on Monday. Think of one little girl in a family of eight boys and no doll for her to play with!"

"You must have been a poor little girl," said Phœbe, gently.

"No, I wasn't," said Grandma, "but nobody thought about playthings in those days. It was always work from year's end to year's end. Little girls must learn how to spin and dye and weave and knit, make soap and candles, gather berries and wild cherries, cut and string apples to dry, —"

"Mercy! Grandma, not when you were little?"

"There was nothing else for little girls to do but to learn to work, and grow up as fast as they could."

Phoebe nodded her head decidedly. "Did you have to work and grow up on Sunday?" she asked sadly.

"No," said Grandma; "the knitting and the patchwork were put away. It was a long, long day. I had to sit quiet most of the time, listening," Grandma looked knowingly at the chatterbox, "always listening to the older people and wondering what I should ever talk about when I grew up. It was a

great day when Loreny, a distant relative, came to spend Sunday with us. She was young and pretty and — well — so different from other people. Her bright eyes took in everything, and some way or other she would do things for us children that nobody else ever thought of doing.

“On this day, when she was visiting us, I had listened until I was sleepy, and then I saw her beckon to me to come to her. How much it meant even to be noticed, and I crept very shyly but happily to her side. She whispered something in my ear that made my heart just leap for joy.”

“What did she say?” cried another joyful heart.

“She said, ‘Find me an old piece of cloth and I will make you a doll.’ I knew I mustn’t trouble anybody to help me, and that I could have only a very old piece of cloth, for every little scrap of cloth that we wove was valuable in those days. I went up garret, where every-

thing was kept, and there I found an old piece of calico that had been an interlining of a coat. I ran back to the kitchen with my treasure, showed it to Mother, and then sat down by Loreny, happier than I had ever been in my life. There was one in the kitchen that I hadn't reckoned with, and that was Becky, the woman who worked for us. It was she who ruled with a rod of iron, and would have kept me busy every minute. She looked crosser than two sticks, but I didn't care — I was to have a doll, and I had it, too, in less time than it takes me to tell you about it. This was the way it was made —"

Grandma went to the big top drawer in the old bureau, found some rolls of cloth, and in about five minutes, without needle or thread, she made a dolly like the one that gladdened her heart nearly eighty years ago. A piece of cloth was rolled up for the body, another piece was tied around this for the arms of the doll, another was folded around for a dress,

and a little three-cornered piece tied on for a waist.

“My one little rag doll meant more to me than all your dolls do to you. I had her only for a little while, and then, one morning, where do you think I found her?”

Phoebe guessed several places. Grandma shook her head. “You never could guess,” she said. “I found her hanging on a nail by the fireplace, made into a holder. Becky had had her way — the cloth in the doll was not to be wasted, nor was any time to be wasted either.” This was a tragedy. Grandma and Phoebe looked sober.

“She was an old — old — rooster cat!” said Phoebe, struggling for words. Grandma forgot her sorrows of long ago and laughed. Those were the only two animals that Phoebe had ever seen scratch or fight. Becky deserved both their names.

“Little girls were trained to mind in those days, and say nothing. I knew the

holder was my doll as quickly as I saw it, but not a word did I say. I ran out of the house as little animals do when they are hurt and want to hide away. I didn't run far, though, before I ran into something that made me quite forget my trouble.

"There," said Grandma, as she put the last touch on the doll, "you may have her."

Then Phoebe forgot, too, the sad end of the doll. "I like her," she said. "What shall we name her?"

"In olden times," said Grandma, thinking, "a name depended upon circumstances. If a little girl was born who brought great happiness with her, she was called Joy or Comfort or Thanks. I suppose nowadays you would call her Gladys."

"Oh, that is a beautiful name!" cried Phoebe. "Let's call her Gladys!"

Phoebe made room for her on the couch, and the queer little figure with a new-fashioned name, took her place in the family of dolls.

"Now, Grandma, what did you run into?"

And the story went on — "into my big brother's arms. Peter was not like the other boys; he was always quiet and kind. I told him what had happened, and he promised that before Loreny came again, I should have a real doll."

"A really and truly doll, Grandma?"

"Wait and you shall see." Grandma went into her bedroom. Phoebe knew that she was looking for something in the little hair-covered trunk that stood at the head of Grandma's bed and had "special treasures" in it.

"I'll shut my eyes tight and you can s'prise me," Phoebe called. What would the doll be like that Grandma had kept all these years?

"Open!" said Grandma, coming into the room.

Phoebe opened her eyes and swallowed a big lump.

"That's a funny doll," was all she could honestly say.

"This is Martha Washington," said Grandma, making an old-fashioned courtesy. "Alice Roosevelt and all the rest of you dollies, rise now and 'make your manners,' for this is the 'first lady of the land.'" But the dolls remained seated, looking as if it would take more than a name to convince them that this was Lady Washington.

"She always looked just as she looks now," said Grandma. "I can't remember that she ever had any other dress."

The "first lady of the land" wore a coarse, tiny-checked pink calico dress, much the worse for its long years' wear. Phoebe lifted her rather gingerly — "Aren't you afraid of microbes?" she asked.

Grandma closed her eyes and shook her head. "You are a child of to-day. What do you know about microbes?"

"I never saw them," said Phoebe, meekly, "but they are 'most like spiders, I think."

"Just as I expected," said Grandma, think-

ing aloud. "Microbes! — we knew nothing and feared nothing; now, you know a little and fear much — never mind, we both know that things must be kept clean with soap and water, and I really think dolly's dress should be washed."

Phœbe turned the doll over and over. Which was back and which was front? Its head was wooden. It had no hair, no nose, no mouth — nothing that looked like a face, except some pencil marks that had been nearly erased.

"Did — did Santa Claus bring her to you?" Phœbe asked doubtfully.

"I knew very little about Santa Claus in those days, but I am sure now that it was some relation of his that gave me the doll. I found her, too, right where Santa Claus might have left her — in a snowbank. I looked out of my window one cold morning, and there in a snowdrift that came almost to the window-sill, stood this doll."

"Why, she's nothing but a stick," said Phoebe, making another discovery.

"Nothing but a stick," said Grandma, "but the most perfect doll I ever had. Peter had done the best he could to keep his promise. He had taken a stick about a foot long and whittled a knob on one end of it. Then boring a hole through the stick, he had fastened with wire two smaller sticks at the sides for arms. The doll was perfect in my eyes — but how should I ever get it dressed and how should I play with it? I hid it away until Loreny should visit us again."

"Like little Moses, wasn't it?" said Phoebe, who always saw what things were like.

"Indeed it was," said Grandma; "mothers are all alike — little and big. That stick was my child, and I hid it where Becky wouldn't be likely to find it."

"Where?"

"Under the husk tick, next to the cords



of my bed. Then it was near me and safe. Wasn't I happy?

"Loreny came, and I brought my doll from its hiding place and showed it to her. I pointed to the holder and she understood. I am sure there were tears in her eyes, and I am sure, too, that her eyes shone with joy when I told her what Peter had done. She took the wooden stick in her hands and sat quietly thinking for a few minutes. Then she set to work. With her own needle and thread and her own patchwork pieces that she brought with her in her workbag, she dressed my doll as you see her to-day. How grand she looked to me once in her pink and white calico dress! and I thought no name suited her so well as the name we had all been taught to love and honor. So that was the way Martha Washington came to me. What do you think — weren't Peter and Loreny some relation to Santa Claus?"

"Yes, surely," said Phœbe, "but Becky

—” she asked doubtfully, “what did she say?”

Grandma shook her head and again “thought out loud.” “People said little in those days, but they did much and did it swiftly.” She shook her finger at the talkative little mother and said very plainly, “I played with Martha Washington quietly and all by myself. The boys teased me, and Becky was more determined than ever that I should never have a spare minute. Many a time, I have heard her call, just as I was slipping out of the door with my doll, ‘Come, Phœbe, rock the baby,’ — Oh, dear! when there was nothing else to do, there was always a baby to rock —”

“Oh, Grandma,” said a joyful voice, “that must have been lovely?”

“I had too much of it,” said Grandma. “I got away, though, sometimes, and ran down into the orchard and played.”

“Tea parties?”

"No such tea parties as you have with real thimble cookies and thimble tea biscuits. The top of a stump was my table. I had acorns for cups and fishbones for teapot, sugar bowl, and milk cup — now you look surprised — well, you shall have some of these bones the first time we have a fish with a large backbone. Martha Washington was my playmate, and all went well till the boys found me, or Becky called. Every night I hid my doll, sometimes under the husk tick and sometimes in it — a pretty hard life for a doll, wasn't it? Becky went the rounds every Saturday morning and stirred up thoroughly every husk bed that was under the feather bed. My doll was found, and without a word to anybody, it was put where Becky thought it would make no more trouble."

"Why didn't you tell your Mamma?" was the anxious query.

"That wasn't the way we did, child; we

children fought our own battles and made no complaints. Two whole days I hunted without saying a word, and then I thought my doll was gone forever. I was coming down the backstair way, sadder, maybe, than some mothers who have lost a child, when I saw, hanging in a turn in the stairs, a big bag full of old pieces of cloth for patchwork and mending. Quick as a flash it came to me that my doll was in that bag. I wasn't long emptying out the rags, sure that I would find Martha Washington—and I did. I held her tight and ran straight to Mother.

“‘I’ve found her,’ I cried. ‘Can I keep her?’”

“I felt I had a right to my doll now, and something in my voice or face must have made Mother feel that I had, too, for she said quietly to Becky:

“‘Let the child have the doll if she wants it.’”

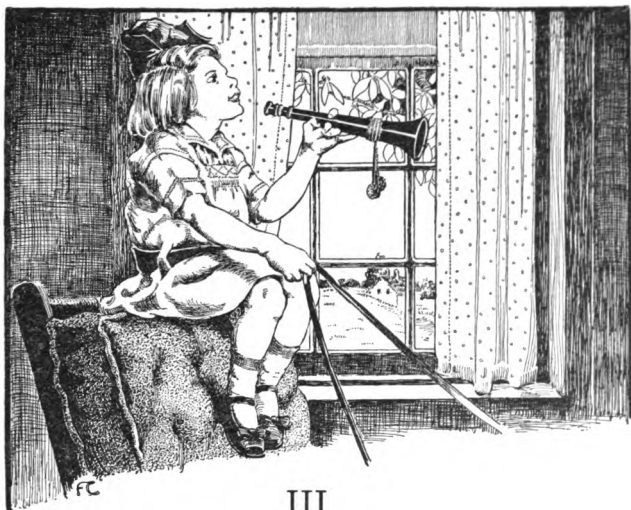
“Then you were happy,” said Phoebe, with shining eyes.

“Yes; Martha Washington and I lived

happily together ever after. Quite a difference, wasn't there, between those days and now? Dolls had to be kept out of sight or into the rag bag they went. Now — " Grandma said no more, but looked at the big family of dolls that had occupied her comfortable couch, undisturbed, for several days.

"If you will please get up and take the big chair, then there will be room for Martha Washington. Thank you."





III

GRANDMA'S PLAYHOUSES

PHŒBE was perched most comfortably on top of the back of a Morris chair. She had been having a very exciting tally-ho ride. Her dolls were sitting below on the cushion. The reins were fastened to the arms of the chair that a few moments before had been wild and troublesome steeds. There had been a great jingling of bells and blowing of horns, but all was quiet now. The little

driver was resting and thinking — thinking of that one lone doll of long ago. Grandma was in her low chair by the window, darning stockings.

Pretty soon the little girl said, "There was no place —" she shook her head sadly — "you had no place to play in where Becky and the boys couldn't bother you? M-m?" was the final query.

Grandma looked up from her mending. It made a great difference how Grandma looked up. Mornings, she wore big steel-bowed spectacles, and afternoons, pretty gold-rimmed ones. She might look calmly through either pair, or lay it peacefully in her lap — then all was well. She might, however, look over the big-bowed spectacles, "'zactly as Grandma Wolf did in Red Riding-Hood" — Phoebe said — then one must "watch out," for something was going wrong. Now Grandma was looking over her glasses. Her eyes rested for a moment on the wonderful doll

house, of sixteen rooms that stretched across one end of the sitting room, and then on the little monarch, seated as if on a throne, who played when and where and as she pleased.

Grandma shook her head as she said, "Surely, surely, times have changed!" There was a pause, then — "I didn't play on the tops of Morris chairs," she said confidently, and waited another minute.

Phoebe slid down among her dolls.

"Just the time," said Grandma, half aloud, looking straight through her glasses out into the orchard. What she meant by "just the time" was her own happy secret. "Would you like to hear about my playhouses," she asked with an odd little smile, "that I used to play in just as I liked and *bothered nobody?*"

"Yes, Grandma," came the answer that meant plainly, "I'll be very good."

The spectacles were laid in Grandma's lap. "I had one playhouse in a big hogshead and

it was upstairs in the hog-house." Grandma heard a gasp, but she paid no attention to it. She looked happy, as if the place were still dear to her. "I wonder why children love cozy little places that they can just crawl into, no matter where they are."

"But it wasn't nice, was it, Grandma?"

Grandma spoke decidedly: "Indeed it was a nice place. Our pigs lived in just as nice a house as the other animals lived in and were just as well cared for. If a little girl came to see me, the first thing we did was to pay our respects to the pigs."

"Huh!"

"Did you say: 'How?' " — and for a minute playhouses were forgotten.

"Piggie Wig and Piggie Wee,
Hungry pigs as pigs could be,"

quoted Grandma from Phoebe's song. "We fed them corn, brought them water — pigs want lots of water — scratched their backs

with a corncob, heard them grunt, then away we skipped upstairs over the cornercribs, and played in the big hogshead. That was one playhouse that I had."

"Huh!" was the only sound that came again from the big chair.

"Did Piggie speak?" asked Grandma, laughing. "You didn't like it, did you?"

Phoebe thought for at least two minutes, and then said slowly: "I think, Grandma, I should like a whole row of barrels for a village."

"Well, don't think any more," said Grandma, looking frightened, "for the next thing, you will want them right here in this room." Grandmas will always be Grandmas, however, and in about a minute she added comfortably: "Some day, if you are here when we pick apples, you shall have your barrels — a whole village of them. Now I will tell you about other playhouses, and perhaps you won't want the barrels.

"There was a tree in the orchard that I

thought a great deal of. This was my 'climb-tree,' as I called it, because the branches spread all over the ground and I could climb from branch to branch and walk all about in the tree. It was a great playhouse — every big branch was a different room. Here I could perch like a bird, now in the garret in the top of the tree, and now out on the ends of the branches, rocking Martha Washington as if she were in a cradle."

Phoebe sighed. What wouldn't she give for a "climb-tree" ?

"Then I had another," said Grandma, who seemed in a hurry to tell about her playhouses. "It was built very much like one you built for your dolls the other day. You drove some sticks into the ground and spread a cloth over them for a roof — "

"That was a merry-go-round," corrected Phoebe.

"Oh, excuse me ; I might have known it was a merry-go-round or a tally-ho or something



else more exciting than a plain little playhouse in which a little girl might learn to keep house." Phoebe unharnessed her horses and neatly rolled up her reins.

Grandma smiled and went on. "Brother George, who was younger than I, was a great builder for those days, and even when he was a little tow-headed boy, he made playhouses for me. Every spring he built me a house that was called a 'shelter.' Hickory poles were driven into the ground and their tops fastened together with crosspieces: Then for a covering we brought from the woods armfuls of hemlock and pine branches that kept green all summer. Girls at school made this kind of a playhouse. In those days there was no game we knew or loved better than playing 'keep house.' What a scramble there would be the first day of school, at recess, for the best places under the trees for these homes! Another and quicker way of building playhouses at school was to gather

sticks and stones and lay these down so as to mark out the houses and their rooms."

"Why, that is stick laying, Grandma."

"Yes, yes, child, we had our kindergarten work, only we didn't know it by that name. There was one other kind of playhouse that I must tell you about," said Grandma, who for some good reason was keeping very close to her subject. "This was built in one corner of the orchard, and it was built to stay, too."

"Built to stay" — what could this be like? Nothing that Phoebe had ever built would stay more than a few minutes. Grandma stood up two books so that they made a square corner, and then laid a third book across the corner.

"There it is," she said. "The fence around the orchard was built of stones, and all I had to do was to find some boards and lay them across one corner of the fence and there was my snug little three-cornered house with solid stone walls and a board roof. Some-

times we lifted the roof with our heads and sometimes a big stone rolled down on us, but little things like that didn't disturb us."

"Who was 'us,' Grandma — not the boys?"



"No, indeed; the boys were too rough to play 'keep house.' Haven't I told you I had one little playmate — Ruth Emmie?"

"What was her after name?"

"Smith — Ruth Emmie Smith — nothing wonderful about the name, but she was won-

derful to me, my one little girl friend. Our homes were a mile apart, but she came cross-lots to see me, once in a while, on Saturday afternoons. Then didn't we play! We sat under the little roofs we had made for ourselves as happy as queens."

Grandma thought, and Phœbe thought for a minute, then Phœbe said: "Queens don't know how cozy it is to be poor and cuddle down in a little house, do they, Grandma? I wish I had a little house just for me and my dolls. I'd take care of it — surely I would."

Grandma nodded in a very satisfied manner. "A little house can be a cozy, happy place, if people only know how to take care of it. Wait till my 'ship comes in,' and you shall have your little house!"

Grandma was always saying "wait for my ship," but this afternoon she looked out of the window, as if her long-talked-of "ship" might really be in sight.

"We had nothing real in those days to play with — everything was 'make-believe.' The little nookies and crannies in the stone wall were our cupboards and ovens. Once in a while Mother would let us build a fire close to the wall, — as I have told you before, we weren't afraid of fire or of anything else in those days, — and then we roasted corn on the ear and apples and potatoes. We had no little pots and kettles, no such little cooking outfit such as I got for you the other day," said Grandma, shaking her head.

"I'll use them, if you will only build me a playhouse," was the eager promise.

Again Grandma looked satisfied. "What do you think we found to play with one day, Ruth Emmie and I, — something that made our happiness just about complete?"

"A stove, Grandma," guessed Phœbe, sure she was right.

Grandma fairly jumped out of her chair. "A stove! in those days! never had we even

seen one. Sometime — not to-day — you shall hear about the great open fireplaces.” Phœbe, who never missed a chance of guessing, kept right on trying to find out the name of the treasure, found so long ago.

“It begins with p. g.,” said Grandma, finally.

“Pig,” shouted Phœbe, guided by sound and Grandma’s funny liking.

Grandma shook her head and cut the guessing short. “A piece of an old pancake-grid-dle —” again there was something like a gasp. “This meant more to us than your finest set of dishes means to you. We were never more happy in our lives, for now we could do some real cooking. How hard we worked to get the things together to cook with ! We found some meal in the cornhouse and mixed it with water in an old gourd that had once been a dipper. At last it was ready, and no prouder mortals ever poured batter on a griddle. I guess we were too puffed up — but the cakes were not.”

Grandma sat shaking her head — “Never, never did I taste such cakes !”

“Were they good ?”

“Good ? I can taste them yet — they were dreadful. We tried our best, though, to eat them, but we had to give it up.”

“I know,” said Phoebe, brightening, “you forgot something.” She looked very wise and sung from a kindergarten song :

“Then in the pan of flour
A little salt she threw ;
A cup of yeast she added,
And poured in water, too.”

“Wonderful !” exclaimed Grandma, pleased beyond words. “You certainly did learn something at kindergarten that was valuable. Now remember this, too, from your old Grandmother, ‘Many a good thing is spoilt for the want of a pinch of salt.’ It would have taken both salt and yeast, though, to have saved those cakes.”

Suddenly she put on her glasses and looked out of the window. A strange looking object was coming up through the orchard. "What is this, Phoebe?" she asked. Grandma's "ship" had come in at last.

Phoebe looked. Her face was full of wonder, then of fright, then of joy, and a glad cry burst out, "What is it, what is it? Oh, Grandma, it isn't for me! it isn't for me! is it?"

The strange thing that was being pulled along on rollers by two strong horses was nothing more nor less than a little dark green house, with a pretty gambrel roof and plenty of windows on every side. It had been built for an artist for a summer studio. He was through with it, Grandma had bought it, and a lucky little girl was to have it in the orchard for a playhouse. Do you know now what Grandma meant when she said, "Just the time"?

"Well, well, well," said Grandma, "I didn't think you would go crazy over it. Yes, it is for you — there, there, child, don't choke

me to death. You are to do real housekeeping in it, real cooking, take care of it, and learn to be a good little housekeeper." Grandma was left alone, for little Flyaway was off for the orchard.

"She won't get any more fun out of it than I did out of my old playhouses, but she may learn something. Times are different, children are different, I'm different, everything is different," Grandma said, her words keeping time with her movements as she put her work quickly back into the basket. "Old times were all right," she added assuringly as she tied on her bonnet, "but they won't come back," and she, too, was off for the orchard.





IV

GRANDMA'S POCKETS

PHŒBE had a new play this morning. She was having a "Loan 'Zibit." She had laid the ironing board on a chair and a stool, and had brought out and arranged on it her best treasures. All the morning a large sign had hung warningly on the door of the dining room:—

PLEASE KEPE
OUT THERE IS
A DOG IN HERE

Now it was taken down and Phoebe sat waiting for her one visitor to come and see her fine "c'lection." She had not long to wait. As if to loan herself for the occasion, a queer-looking little figure, wearing an old-fashioned calash and a short lace cape, appeared in the doorway. She politely presented her ticket of admission that read:—

ADMIT GRAND
MA 10 PINS
PLEASE WARE
YOUR BEST DRESS

That the visitor had arrived and was welcome nobody in the house who heard the shrieks of delight doubted. The guest thoughtfully laid aside her "funny bonnet" and the hostess promptly put it on. Then Grandma rubbed her glasses and was ready to enjoy the surprise that Phoebe had worked so hard to get ready for her.

It was a fine sight, indeed, and Grandma was as pleased as a child to see the beautiful display of bags and purses that it was the good fortune of one little girl to own. The two playmates looked with real interest at each specimen in the "'Zibit," and Phoebe told its history.

The little gray suède belt bag with silver trimmings had been brought from the Capitol City; the dainty chatelaine purse, made of links of gun-metal and lined with blue silk, was from Aunt Grace on Phoebe's fifth birthday; the black leather wrist bag had been sent by a cousin from the far West.

"I keep my money in this one; everybody is afraid of it," said Phoebe, pointing to the clasps of silver snakes' heads, whose fiery garnet eyes shone steadily without once blinking.

The dear little brown specie book, that just fitted Phoebe's hands and had the letter "P" on it in red, was from — "you know who"; the green Japanese shopping bag, made of firmly woven cord, had been coaxed away from "Aunt Oocy." There were pocket-books of different shapes and sizes, in green and red and the beautiful changing tints of mother-of-pearl — all presents that had come from mountain, plain, and seaside. Lastly there was the little, old, rusty traveling bag, that, packed with china cats, dogs, and dollies, had gone with Phoebe in her own little hands, in all her travels since her baby days.

Such a lucky little girl! Next to dolls, Phoebe loved best pocketbooks and bags, and in some way her friends had found this

out. So what more beautiful could she have thought of this morning for her "Zibit"?

"Phœbe," said Grandma, "do you remember the boy we read about in the fairy tale, who said 'Bricklebrit' to his donkey and he had all the gold he wanted? This shower of bags and purses looks as if you had said the magic word —" Grandma was thinking aloud — "and you have — the right word, the right act, at the right time, and, first you know, come the things you like from every corner of the earth. They are all very pretty," she said cordially, "but — do you know? — I wouldn't give one of my old pockets for all your fine, new bags."

"Pockets!" said Phœbe — what had bags and purses to do with pockets — coat pockets — the only kind she knew anything about?

"Yes, pockets. See what I have on," and Grandma thrust her hand through an opening left in the seam of her old-fashioned skirt. "I have my pocket tied around my waist." In

an instant she was holding up the pocket by two long strings.

"Where is the pocket?" asked Phœbe, who saw only an embroidered square of cloth, that looked as if it might have been an apron.

"The whole thing is the pocket," said Grandma, laughing. "See, it is double, and here is the opening," and she showed Phœbe the slit down the center.

"It brings it all back — the old days," she said, slowly nodding her head. "This embroidered pocket tells the whole story of our lives. It was Mother's pocket and all her very own, for she made every bit of it. The flax of which the linen was made was raised on our farm. Mother and the help hatched it, spun it into thread, wove the thread into cloth, and made the cloth into this bag — you never will know what all this work meant. The wool that the bag is embroidered with was sheared from our sheep, and Mother carded it and spun and dyed the

yarn. She made the pattern for the embroidery and even wove the tape for a shirr-string in a little tape loom."

Phoebe understood really very little of what Grandma was saying, but one thing she did understand — that in those far-off days, people had to work hard and make everything or else go without it. There was no need for Grandma to say, "You see now why we took such good care of everything."

She tied the pocket around Phoebe's waist.

"It held a bushel, didn't it?" said Phoebe, diving down into one of its corners.

"Pretty nearly. Wherever I went, nutting or visiting, a pocket was all I needed for carrying my things, and every day and all the days, a pocket must never fail to have in it such useful articles as a ball of thread, knitting work, a housewife —"

A housewife! was Grandma telling a fairy story? "Not a maid?" Phoebe exclaimed.

"Look into both corners of that pocket and

see if you don't find something." Phoebe explored. Maybe she would find a maid like Thumblin! Something was there, surely, but how disappointed she looked as she held up a roll of coarse, faded, dark blue calico.

"That is it," said Grandma. "That was Mother's old housewife, or 'hussuf' or 'huzzy,' as it was sometimes called. It must always be handy and have the handy things in it, such as little strips of linen, needles and thread and bees' wax for the hasty stitch, and treasures such as only mothers save. Look —" and Grandma showed the five little pockets, made of different kinds of calico, that had been sewed on the dark blue piece and then the edges all bound together with a strip of linen.

Very carefully Phoebe looked into the little pockets. In one, she found a lock of hair, wrapped in paper — a little curl, soft and flaxen — and in the same pocket, a little bib, that Grandma said was called a fiddle-bib — relics that were more than curiosities even

now, for they told of a sacred love between mother and child. In another pocket was an old tape needle that had Andrew Jackson's name on it.

"He was the President when that needle was made," Grandma explained, "and everything was named after him."

"Like the Teddy bears," said Phoebe, pointing to Mr. Roosevelt's namesake, who still held his own as driver of an automobile.

"Yes," said Grandma; "in some ways people don't change much. Everybody in those days either loved or hated Jackson, and his name was in everybody's mouth."

"Jackson balls!" cried Phoebe, suddenly remembering one that had filled her mouth only a short time ago.

Grandma looked pleased. She was still loyal to the old soldier. "Hard as flint and the pure stuff," she said, thinking of the candy tokens and the man after whom they were named.

Phoebe was looking into another pocket. What was this? She unrolled a paper and her face looked blank. Four little front teeth lay in her hand.

"Did you study 'gomology'?" she asked doubtfully — "all about the meat and bones you're made of?"

"Mercy, no! we didn't know the word 'physiology' any better than you do, but there was one thing we must do in those days, that was more important than any other, and that was — *we must remember*. Whatever else happened, times and friends must never be forgot." Grandma had been true to her training; her heart was full of memories that she longed to talk about. "Any little thing that would help us remember must be kept forever," and then Phoebe waited patiently while Grandma told about the pretty things exchanged between friends, such as pressed flowers, paper hearts woven together, and paper hands clasped in friendship; of em-

broidered bookmarks and samplers, each bearing the one device, "Remember me." The burden laid on every child's heart was "remember, remember," and many a boy was whipped at the corner boundary stones that he might always remember where they were placed. It was a good memory, more than any other trait, that was a mark of a great mind.

"'Lest we forget,' how much that meant in those days," she said, taking up the little teeth. "These were my oldest brother's front teeth. They were saved that Mother might always remember something that happened and be thankful every time she thought of it. When Hiram was a little boy, he was holding a horse by a halter. Suddenly the horse reared and one of its forefeet struck him in the mouth. His lip wasn't even cut, but four of his front teeth were knocked out. So you see why they were precious, don't you?"

Phoebe knew. Grandma was always thank-

ful — for the good things, because they were good — for the bad, because they were no worse. So Phoebe said simply, "'Cause there were only four."

"Very true," said Grandma, "the boy was spared with only four little teeth missing. Now," she said, blithe as a bird, "I am going to show you another of my pockets. You'll think it's homely, but then —"

"Oh, get it!" was the cry; "I'll like it, I know I shall."

Grandma went off by herself into the parlor. There, hanging on the back of an upholstered chair that stood close against the wall, was a bag containing her best spoons. Nobody in the house, she thought, knew this hiding place except herself. She took the spoons out and laid them on the mantel, and, swinging the bag on her arm, walked out. Phoebe was waiting for her with big round eyes.

"Is that it?" she said slowly, and she might just as well have said, "It is homely."

Old, dingy, faded, ugly in shape and size, the bag was indeed homely. It was made of coarse calico that had once been buff with crossbars of brown, but the colors had worn off long ago. It was over a foot deep and wider than it was deep. There was one long string run in the top edge for a shirr-string, and with this the bag was swung on the arm and carried. Grandma looked at the old bag as it hung at her side, and Phœbe, looking at Grandma, saw something in her face that made her say softly: "Tell me about it, Grandma."

"It is an old friend, Phœbe; Grandma and the bag have been together a good many years. It was my first workbag, and Becky made it for me."

"Becky?"

"Yes, Becky. She thought I needed one to keep my work in — and she saw, too, that I always had work enough in it. She told me one day after dinner if I would mind the baby

all the afternoon, she would make me a work-bag. I minded the baby with a will that afternoon. If the sides of the old cradle hadn't been high, the baby would have rolled on the floor, for I rocked so hard, he just bounced from side to side. Becky kept her word and made the bag, and about four o'clock, I walked out of the house, as proud as a peacock, with my first workbag hung on my arm. Pretty soon I wanted something to put into it, and all I could think of was an egg. So I found an egg and carried it around in my big bag, perfectly satisfied and happy. Then the sad thing happened. I forgot. I climbed over a fence and as I jumped to the ground, something smashed. For a minute my heart stood still, but the next, I was up and off and running for the creek as fast as I could go. I washed out the bag and hung it in the garret on an old spinning wheel to dry. The next day it was as good as new and Becky none the wiser for the accident. I was wiser,

though; I carried my work, and not eggs, in my workbag after that."

She opened the bag. "Big enough to hold a watermelon, isn't it? When I went to see Ruth Emmie, or she came to see me, we packed all our patchwork pieces in our bags."

"What, rags," asked Phoebe, "like those you wanted me to sew together?"

"Yes, rags, as you call them. They were our choicest treasures."

Again Grandma forgot bags and pockets, and she was sitting once more with her little friend of long ago. Together they looked over what to them was a wonderful collection of patchwork pieces. Every piece was examined and talked about. The light ones must be sorted from the dark, and then the prettiest one of all must be decided upon. No books or pictures ever afforded children more pleasure than did the little homespun pieces carefully hoarded from day to day.

"I was never happier," Grandma said, "if



I chanced to be visiting, than when the lady of the house lighted a candle and beckoned for me to follow her. Then I knew she was going into some dark closet, where she would find patchwork pieces for me."

Phoebe looked guilty. Had she not crammed all the rags that Grandma had found for her, into a little box footstool and pushed it under the lounge as far back as she could reach?

"Wait till you see what I did with rags," said Grandma, not willing to drop the subject — "my Rising Sun and Irish Chain and my pretty Hearts and Gizzards —"

Teeth and now pretty hearts and gizzards! what next? Grandma paid no attention to interruptions — "and the most wonderful of all, my Beggars' Work, pieced out of all the odds and ends — you'll prize them when you see them. Oh, well, times are different — maybe it would be foolish to piece bedquilts now."

Phoebe's face brightened. Grandma went to the mantel, took down a candlestick, lighted the candle, and said, "Come with me and I'll show you something worth looking at."

Phoebe didn't know what was coming, but like Phoebe of old, she was willing to follow a light into a dark closet and see and hear "something more."

In a few minutes the two were upstairs, sitting on the floor of the storeroom, looking into an old green chest.

"Here they all are in the till," Grandma said, opening the little box in the end of the chest.

"Oh, that's a stylish one!" cried Phoebe, as Grandma took a small bag from its wrappings.

Grandma hung it on her wrist. "This is what I carried my handkerchief in when I was a young lady." It was made of diamond-shaped and three-cornered pieces of soft blue and white wool delain embroidered with

French knots. "I wore it only when I dressed up," said Grandma, showing the white lining and carefully touching the faded tassel that hung from the bottom.

Another package was taken from the till. It proved to be a thick square needlebook, made of bright green silk and red flannel, with cardboard covers that were finely embroidered with shaded red roses. "Hiram's wife always carried this in her best workbag. She was very particular. This was hers, too," and Grandma unrolled an oblong piece of canvas. It was covered on the outside with solid embroidery done in a diamond pattern with shaded brown yarn, and on the inside was a lining of pink silk, on which were fastened leaves of white flannel and pockets of pink silk.

"Here is one that is worth its weight in gold," said Grandma, taking off its wrapping of an old silk handkerchief. She held up the bag for Phoebe to see.

"Oh, that is the beautifulest one I ever saw

in all my life!" said the little bag collector, who looked as if she, too, at last, was perfectly satisfied. It was an oval-shaped handkerchief bag, such as ladies carried nearly a hundred years ago. It was of solid bead-work. Flowers and leaves and scrolls were done in gilt beads on a background of bluish white ones, while around the lower edge were loops of the white and gilt beads. How softly it glistened as Grandma held it up in the candlelight!

"You didn't make that, did you?" Phœbe asked in wonder.

"My mother made it and carried it for the first time on her wedding day. I have heard her tell how she went off into the orchard all by herself and worked on this bag. This was only for 'high days and holy days,' but some kind of a pocket there must be for every day. Not this — " Grandma shook her head.

Phœbe was looking at the bag with longing eyes.

“Not now, Phoebe,” said Grandma, wrapping up the bag and laying it away, “but some day.

“How do you like this for a pocketbook?” She took out an immense red leather wallet. “This held valuable papers and was kept hidden behind a panel in the kitchen wall. There, that is the last, I think.”

Phoebe drew a deep breath and said, “Well, Grandma, I think your bags are a hundred thousand times nicer than mine.”

Grandma looked pleased, and the bags were all put back. “I know who will have them all some day — some day,” she said.

“That will be like a fairy story, won’t it?” and two arms were around Grandma’s neck.

“Yes,” said Grandma; “the right word at the right time, and some day, the fairies will send what you want.”

Phoebe thought a minute. “It is always ‘some day,’ and I want now, *now*, Grandma, a pocket and a big workbag, ’zactly like yours,

to hang on my arm, and an egg, oh, an egg, to put in it !”

The next morning, a bag and a pocket were on a chair by the side of Phœbe’s bed, and in the bag, an egg, *hard-boiled*, lest history “‘zactly” repeat itself.





V

THE OLD SANDBANK

THE raindrops were beginning to fall, and Phoebe was cross. She didn't want to cut or paste or sew or do anything else, except what she couldn't do. Grandma didn't like to hear a whine in the sweet voice, but she knew she had only to wait a few minutes and the sunshine would come back into Phoebe's face.

"You'll never guess why I was glad that it was going to rain, when I was a little girl," said Grandma, coaxingly.

There was no reply.

"And then I was glad when it stopped."

"You were a queer little girl, any way — glad over everything," Phœbe said crossly.

It was Grandma's turn to keep still. She went on peeling apples. Soon a little green saucer of quartered apples was set on the corner of the table, somebody slid into a chair that stood near it, a mild voice said, "Thank you," with its usual upward slide, and every sign of cloud and mist was gone from Phœbe's face.

"Tell me why you were glad, Grandma," she said, looking now as if she were closely related to the glad-hearted little girl of long ago.

"We children waited days and days sometimes, hoping it would rain. We knew just about when it would come, too, for we knew the 'signs,' and nobody doubted them."

Phœbe looked at Grandma with a new interest. "Oh, I know," she said, "you are

a 'weather breeder.' You can tell me whether it is going to clear off or not."

Grandma looked at the big raindrops rattling against the window and nodded wisely as if she knew — but to be called a "weather-breeder"! What an ignoramus the child was on some subjects. Very seriously, then, as if now was the time and nothing of more importance, she told Phoebe about the bright days that sometimes were full of signs of coming storm and that such days were called "weather breeders," but people who were wise enough to know a few weather signs and could tell whether it would rain or shine, were called "weather prophets."

"Do you mean to call me a 'weather breeder'?" and Grandma put on the look and the growl of the big bear in the "Three Bears" story. "I want you to understand that I am a 'weather prophet'" — the big bear vanished — "and *you* are to keep your eyes open and learn to be a 'weather prophet.' Then

you will know why the weather is one of the most interesting things in the world and will love it, whether fair or foul, and love to talk about it."

Phoebe's crossness had stirred up Grandma, and she was holding forth on her favorite topic.

"Mother Goose knew a thing or two" — Grandma recited trippingly: —

"One misty, moisty morning, I chanced to meet
the weather,
And he was an old man all clothed in leather.
He began to compliment and I began to grin,
'How do you do? and how do you do? and
how do you do again?'"

"Meet Mr. Weather with a smile, even if he has his raincoat^t on, and just make up your mind that you and he will have a good time together."

"I don't know the 'signs,'" said Phoebe, not very hopefully — "only the little flags."

"Little flags!" said Grandma, scornfully.

“We didn’t need blue and red flags to tell us whether it would rain or not. The old rooster was our weather bureau. If he crowed on the ground, it was going to rain. If he hopped on the fence and crowed, it would clear off. If the rooster crowed to bed, he would rise with a watery head. The Man in the Moon, too, instead of the man in Washington, gave us our signals. If the new moon stood up straight, so that the old Indian couldn’t hang his powder horn on it, it was a wet moon. If it lay on its back, it was a dry moon. ‘Mackerel sky’ meant rain close by. If the stones in the cellar were sweaty and dripping, it would surely rain, but if the bricks in the kitchen floor dried off quickly after they had been mopped, it would be fair weather, or if the swallows flew high, or the smoke went straight up, it would be fair. —” On and on Grandma went, telling of signs and wonders that Phoebe had never dreamed of and that might or might not baffle a wise man to

explain. They bubbled up from the simple heart of a true child of nature —

“We heard the robin when it sung for rain ; we knew the cry of the tree toad and the mournful note of the cold-weather bird ; and our hearts just leaped for joy when we heard for the first time the peepers in the spring — although we knew they must be shut up twice by the cold before spring would come to stay. Ah, we had time in those days to see and hear things and make friends with everything around us. There isn’t time any more.”

“Yes, there is, Grandma. Look, the smoke ! it is going to clear off.”

“Good !” said Grandma. “It goes straight up. Now every day you watch the sky and the wind and the moon and see what they will come to tell you. And when you sing your little kindergarten song to us, as you do every morning,

“‘Good morning to you, good morning to you,
Good morning, dear sunshine, good morning to
you,’

whether the sun shines or not, I want you to sing also,

“ ‘Good morning to you, good morning to you,
Good morning, dear weather, good morning to
-- you.’ ”

Phoebe was delighted with the addition, and promised to look for the rooster signs every morning. Grandma felt as relieved and satisfied as if she had done a good stroke of work.

“Now I will tell you why I was glad,” she said, knowing well that Phoebe had the dropped thread safely in her hand. “The rain would come and the rain would go, making us children twice glad, for after the rain would come fun in the sandbank that was back of the house. Children do strange things when they are glad. The happier they are, the more queerly they act. After the rain was over, we were like colts let loose. John or George would put his head in at the door and shout ‘Come on.’ That was the signal they would play with me,

and we were to race for the sandbank. The first one there could have first choice for his farmland — just like older people,” Grandma said to herself.

“Our first caper,” and she laughed, “was to stoop down and lick the sand with our tongues and crack it with our teeth; and next we would lie flat down and leave the prints of our faces in the sand. Then we must explore the bank for holes that the bank swallows had made and run our arms into them full length, trying to touch their nests — oh, we didn’t hurt anything,” she said, seeing a surprised look on Phoebe’s face. “There wasn’t a living thing on the farm but John knew where to find it and could handle it.

“After these pranks were over, we settled down to business — laid out our farms and built sand houses and sand barns —”

“I know why you liked the rain,” cried Phoebe; “the sand had to be wet before you could play in it. We have a sand table at



school. I know how to build sand houses, too," she said, glad, as always, to tell something that she knew. Again Grandma and Phoebe were on common ground — common sand this time — only one had the sand in the open with no teacher but a child's free will, and the other, on a three by six table with somebody to encourage and help at every stage of the play. They were the same, doubtless — with a difference — but Phoebe sighed for the great open bank.

"How?" asked Grandma, willing to compare notes.

"You just lay your hand down in the sand and cover it deep, deep, and you pat it and pat it hard, and smooth it until it is as smooth and round as anything. Then you take your hand out very, very carefully, and there is your house — and a little door in it."

"Very good," said Grandma, "only we molded the sand over our feet as well as over our hands. Our farms looked pretty much

alike until one day, when Cousin Loreny came to see us."

"If you could only have had her all the time, Grandma."

"Yes, as you have your teacher with your little sand table. Loreny always saw a new and better way of doing things and made us find it out. On this day, after we had raced for the sandbank, she said: 'Now have a head race and each of you think of something new to put on your farms and I'll decide which comes out ahead.'

"We liked a new game and we liked to please Cousin Loreny, so we went to work with a will. We built our fences as usual."

Phoebe wanted to know just how they were built.

Grandma put aside her apples and found some little sticks. She crossed two and stuck them into the earth in a flowerpot, then two more in the same manner about four inches from the first pair, and rested another stick

in their crotches. "We called such a fence a rail fence. Another we made so-fashion," and she took one end of the cross stick from one of the crotches and let it rest on the earth. "This we called a gun fence, and then there were the little stone fences like those you built at the seashore."

Grandma was not allowed to leave out one item in the laying out of those farms. Perhaps she had an idea that in the very near future history might again repeat itself. "A farm wasn't very valuable in those days without woodland on it. So tiny branches of different kind of trees must be gotten together and stuck into the sand. George had groves of locusts and oaks — valuable for building; John had pines —"

"Christmas trees!" was the shout at this point.

"A bit of pine didn't mean a Christmas tree to us as it does to you. Shall I tell you the kind of fun a pine tree did mean to us? It meant pitch."

Phœbe looked perfectly blank.

"We scraped it off from pine logs, with a flat stick, into a cup, boiled it down, and made shoemakers' wax —" Grandma smiled.

Where was there fun in that?

"And — " she hesitated, "chawed it."

Phœbe's eyes opened wide.

"Yes, 'chawed' is a very good word for such an act. If we said 'chaw' to-day, perhaps people wouldn't *chew gum*."

Phœbe agreed — she was sure nobody ever "chawed." She daintily nibbled her apple and thought about the farms. "I know what your trees were," she said, ready to go on, — "they were apple trees."

Grandma told how rows of little apple twigs were set out for orchards, and in the open fields clusters of butternut trees and whole woods of hickory and chestnut.

"Just because you loved to go nutting. You ought to have been a squirrel, Grandma."

Again there was danger of Grandma switch-

ing off from her story, for visions of frost and rain and wind and then bright October days flashed through her mind, and in the golden glow of the woods trudged a plain little brownie girl, scratching the leaves here and there, like a ground robin, that she might find the last stray chestnut to add to her own winter's hoard tied up in a stocking. Such a series of pictures! and how the sight of them warmed her heart!

Had Grandma forgotten the play farms? "Was that all?" asked the little prompter.

"Why, I have only just begun," said Grandma. "The great thing on this day was the finishing touch that each of us gave to his farm, as he tried to make it different, and better than it ever was before. All we knew was our everyday home life, but don't think from that there was nothing new or exciting in our 'make-believes.' I added a little porch over the door of my sand house — and what was grander in those days than a porch with

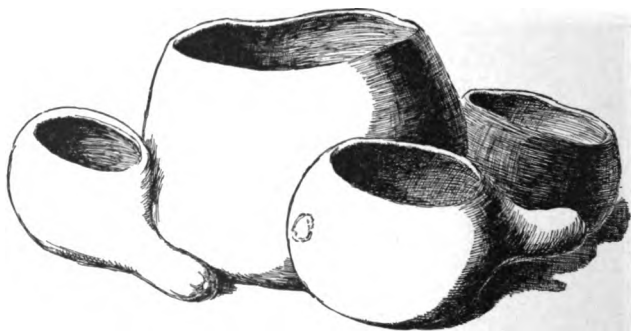
a seat on either side? Loreny picked a few flowers for me, from Mother's flower beds — such as 'merrygolds' and 'loxspurs' and bachelor's buttons and always bergamont and rosemary to smell sweet — these I stuck in the sand each side of the little path that I made from my door to the gate. That was all — my farm was done and I was content."

Phoebe could see the farm in her mind's eye, and she, too, looked content.

"The boys cared little for my porch and posies — such things were nothing compared with what they would make. George took some string from his pocket, and in a jiffy, made a swing between two of his trees and put a swing board in it. Then he made something that tickled me 'most to pieces. He dug a hole in the sand and sunk in it a part of a gourd. Near this he stuck a crotched stick and rested in the crotch a longer stick. It was to be a well — a 'really and truly' well with a long sweep."

Phoebe knew — she had seen “the old oaken bucket” picture, but her picture of the little gourd well was not quite complete.

“What was the bucket made of?” she cried, and Grandma knew it would not be many hours before there would be in the backyard a farm and a swing and a well.



“A little bit of a gourd,” Grandma replied, “something like the one I gave you the other day.” Phoebe went straight to the kitchen and got her little green and yellow gourd from the shelf where it was drying. Then for a few minutes,—how could she help it?—Grandma talked about gourds—how they

were planted, little and big, every year, and how, when they were ripe, one whole day was taken to fix the dippers and spice cans and boxes and cups that were made out of gourds. She showed how the handles were wound with cloth when the gourds were green, so that the handles wouldn't grow large; how holes were cut in the tops or in the sides of the gourds, according to what they were used for, and the edges bound with cloth to keep them from splitting. Many a family, she said, had no other dipper than a big gourd shell, and sometimes they had no other pail.

"Why, there was an old song — wasn't it funny?" and Phoebe thought it was, as Grandma sung a few lines from it:—

"They had but one cow
And they milked her in a gourd,
And set it in a corner
And kivered it with a board."

Gourds might have been a sign of poverty once upon a time, but now a new value had

been put upon them, and Phoebe held hers tightly in her hand.

The last and best was yet to come, but Grandma was seldom in a hurry. She worked and talked, and talked and then worked. She put her apples stewing, looked at Phoebe's "purple pie" that was in the oven. Then she was ready to answer the eager query, "John — what did he do?"

She made no haste, however, to finish the race of bright ideas that she was telling about — perhaps the "weather prophet" was racing with the raindrops and willing that they should beat her. The little animals on the make-believe farms were described. The little striped acorns were used for sheep, the big, fat brown acorns, for cows, and the long, shiny, sweet acorns, for horses. Sometimes all kinds of animals were made out of teeny potatoes with four little sticks stuck into them for legs. Of course the animals were put into the pasture lots, "and of course,"

said Grandma, emphatically, "we never forgot two things — shade trees and a brook, in a pasture lot."

Phoebe nodded — she filled the low tub in the yard twice a day for birds and animals. "And dollies — you had no little bits of dollies?" she asked.

"Yes, we had little sticks that we called our men and women. They were little twigs that were broken from trees like the maple, whose buds or branches grow opposite. The little branches or leaf stems on opposite sides looked like arms, so it was easy enough to imagine that such sticks were men and women.



But the most beautiful ladies Loreny showed me how to make out of poppies and hollyhocks. By turning the big petals of these

flowers back from their pistils and tying the petals down, the flowers can be made to look like little ladies with heads and waists and skirts of shiny, bright-colored silk.

“George and I were putting the make-believe animals in our lots, when we heard John say, ‘I guess I will put my animals in the barns.’ We looked at his farm and saw nothing new, except that he had made his barns larger than usual. He left us and was gone a little while. When he came back, he was holding on to his pockets and some pieces of string were hanging out of them. He made us go off and lie face down in the sand until he was ready for us to look.

“In a minute Loreny came out to see the end of our labors, and who should appear, too, just as John shouted ‘Ready!’ but Becky, carrying in her arms the big knife box full of knives and forks for us to scour in the sand. Cousin Loreny thought the farms wonderful. She picked a posy from my flower beds and

dipped some water from George's well and drank from an acorn-cup, while Becky snorted with wrath over such a waste of time and — string, which she saw lying in the sand and stooped to pick up.

“‘Hst!’ said John to her in a way that made us all jump.

“He opened the door of one of his barns. Now it was his turn to show that he was not to be outdone by the others. He drew out a leaf on which were lying five little white land snails, ‘the father and mother and three little ones,’ he said, that he had found not far apart in the woods under the leaves. These were his sheep. He picked up a string and pulled out what he called his cow — a tiny box turtle. He opened the door of another barn and out crawled a baby mouse, dragging behind it a little walnut shuck, that we were told was a sled.”

“Oh, like Cinderella, wasn't it?” Phoebe cried joyfully.

“‘That is my work horse,’ John said, ‘and this is my racer.’ He picked up another string, opened a third door, and a beautiful little garter snake wriggled out on the sand. In a second, Becky was missing. She and her knives and forks went back to the kitchen more quickly than they came out. Nobody else thought of being afraid. We were used to John’s animals. He could tame and handle, without being hurt, any kind of an animal. I nearly broke his heart once by killing a bee that was on top of his little tow head. I struck it a fearful blow with a stick, and he cried, not from the blow, but for the bee. ‘It’s deaded, it’s deaded!’ he said.

“Loreny loved best of all his kindness for animals, and she decided, as we knew she would do, that John had won the race.”

Phoebe sat thinking and wishing. “Is that all?” she asked. Her mind was made up on a lot of things she would like to do, if she only had a chance.

"Pretty nearly," said Grandma. "Peter came, and Loreny sent him to fetch the knives and forks. I wondered why he staid and helped scour them. So on this day, five jolly people, instead of one lonely little girl, sat in the sandbank and scoured knives and forks in the wet sand. The job was soon done. Then with a shout of 'Keel i' over!' John and George and I went head over heels down the steep bank, and that kind of work and play was done until the next rainstorm."

Rain or shine, what good times Grandma had !

Grandma looked out of the window. "Keel i' over!" she cried. "The rain is over! And I know something that you don't know. A man brought a wagon load of sand here this morning before you were up, and emptied it in my backyard. What do you suppose he brought it here for—for me to scour my knives in?"

"Keel i' over, keel i' over!" sung a happy little girl.



VI

GRANDMA'S SCHOOL DAYS

PHOEBE was reading her lesson. She read a little in her book every day. Grandma was listening as she went about her morning work, and "somebody else," helping, was listening also. Grandma was puzzled over something, but she kept still for a long time.

At last she said slowly, "Phoebe, do you know your letters?"

And Phoebe replied brightly, "I don't believe I know them all."

This was too much for Grandma. Almost six years old, and not know her letters! "And you read, too," she cried; "I heard you reading about 'squirrel' and 'daisies' and 'butter-

cups' — how can you read such words and not know your letters?" and Grandma's "specs" shone big and glaring, as she looked up from the tumblers she was polishing.

The little figure curled up on the couch only laughed. "Why, I read, Grandma, just as you do. I look at my book and make my mouth go. I can 'member 'squirrel' all right, 'cause it looks like a squirrel, and 'buttercups' and 'robin' — they look like something, but I can't 'member 'have' and 'some,' Phoebe said sadly, "they don't look like anything."

Grandma looked more puzzled than ever after this explanation. "Can you spell?" she asked curiously.

"Not much. I can spell c-a-t, cat; r-a-t, rat; b-a-b-y, baby," said Phoebe, clicking off the words as fast as a typewriter.

"But you can't spell a new word?" said Grandma, trying to get to the bottom of the matter.

“Not yet. I’m studying ‘b’ now. The teacher told us it sounded just like a baby trying to talk — ‘buh, buh, buh’ she went. She said it was in ‘buh-book’ and ‘buh-box’ and ‘buh-bee’ and told me to listen sharp. I did listen and then she said we would play a game and find words with ‘b’ in them. I told her right off that if it was in a *bee*, it was in a *hornet*. She laughed and said, ‘Phœbe, Phœbe, you think of *things* and not *words*.’”

Then Grandma laughed. “I might as well give up,” she said; “such teaching is beyond me and my time.”

“Mamma gets ‘scouraged, too,” said Phœbe, “but Papa says, ‘I’m proud of you’ — that’s when I spell. Do you want me to spell ‘dog’? G-o-t, dog,” said Phœbe, slowly.

“Phœbe, if you keep on, you’ll be as great a speller as Simple Sal was, who went to school when I did. One day the teacher wanted her to spell ‘wit.’ ‘Spell what you need most,

Sal,' he said. The child looked down at herself and spelled 't-o-e, clothes.'"

Phoebe didn't see much point to the story. She wasn't going to be like any Simple Sal, though, and she bent over her book in a very serious manner. For a little time all was quiet. Finally a sigh was heard and a tired voice said: "Grandma, I think you have upset me."

"No, I haven't," said Grandma, decidedly, "the trouble is, everything is upset. I learned my letters, then little words, and then big words. You learn big words and then your letters — if you learn them at all. What if you had to learn them as I learned mine!"

Grandma sat down to look for a "receipt" in her old "receipt book." Phoebe kept very still. Grandma found what she was looking for; and the little fisherman was ready to throw out her bait. She knew how to make Grandma talk.

"Did you learn your letters in the kinder-

garten or in the public school?" asked a coaxing voice.

Grandma handed the "Hard Sugar Cooky receipt" to somebody who was waiting, laid aside the big, glaring spectacles, and put on the pretty gold ones. Then folding her hands on the old book, and with a look of happiness on her face, she said; "I will tell you. My first school was on the old hearth in the kitchen. I learned my letters from the bricks. I wasn't much more than a baby, when a little girl who went to school used to stop at our house every morning in the winter to warm herself. She would take a black coal from the hearth and make letters on the bricks. These she would teach to me and tell me I must know them when she came again. It wasn't long before I learned to have the bricks brushed and ready for my lesson."

"That must have been fun," said Phoebe.

"Fun or not, I learned my letters in this way. When I went to school, I went to what

was called a 'Deestricht School.' I couldn't have been more than three years old when I began to go to school, and the schoolhouse was a mile away from our farm."

This fact, too, seemed to have its bright side. "Then did you 'grajerate' when you were a little girl—Mm? Did you?" Phoebe asked hopefully.

"In those days," said Grandma, "children knew a great deal when they were six years old. Yes, they graduated young and didn't keep on going to school till they were old men and women. I have read of boys who were ready for college at the age of six, and of one who entered a law school at eight."

Phoebe shook her head. "Didn't their Mammās go with them?"

"No, indeed! as I have told you before, children learned early to fight their own battles. I went to school with five or six brothers, but I always had my own little dinner basket. How little you know what school meant in those days."

Phoebe waited and wondered why Grandma looked so sober.

"I sat all day long, in front of the teacher's desk, on a long bench that was the split side of a log, with nothing to do but wait and wait, and, I guess, ache and ache, for my turn to come to say my lesson."

Phoebe's eyes were wide open with astonishment. No little chairs, no circle, no long tables to work at! She couldn't think of a school without them.

"No, there were no blocks or balls or beads for busy work. There was nothing for us little ones to do, or even to look at. There was plenty to listen to, and we listened until we fell asleep. Two things always hung on the wall. Pictures? Oh, no! a shiny black-board and over it, a bunch of whips."

"I know," said Phoebe, "our teacher had a bunch of whips one day. They had Pussy Willows on them, and she gave us each a whip to look at. Then we had to draw it and tell

a story about it, and when we got all through, we sung 'Pussy Willow.'"

Grandma smiled. Whips in her day were not used as a subject of story and song, but she only said: "There were no pussy willows on these gads. As for pictures — yes, there *were* pictures on the wall, just as there are in the sky at night, if you look long enough. The wall was old and rough and had been mended in places. I had nothing to do except study these queer-shaped patches. I looked and looked at them until I saw the faces of old men, little chubby boys and girls, and strange animals. They grew to be like the faces of friends, and I can see them to this day."

Phœbe looked at the ceiling. Here was a new field for study.

"In the summer," Grandma went on, "we had a woman teacher — a 'Yankee school-marm,' if we could get one. She taught us how to plait straw bonnets and sew. We had



to make samplers like the one that I have framed which shows all the different stitches and letters. We learned how to darn and overhand and do all kinds of sewing. I remember making sheets and pillow-cases in school. In the summer school, we sewed more than we studied. The summer teacher always had her thimble on, made of iron, sometimes, and she could do some hard tapping with it. If we didn't do just right, we were tapped on the head with her thimble. When she called school, she tapped with it on the window pane or on the side of the schoolhouse."

"Weren't you glad when you didn't have a woman teacher and didn't have to sew or get tapped on the head," was the anxious query. But when Grandma told how the man teacher always carried a heavy ruler or rod which he used for rapping on the doorpost or on the boys and girls to keep them in order, Phoebe thought there wasn't much choice between the teachers of those days.

“There were no bells for calling us together, but at the first sound of the ruler or of the thimble or of a heavy chain that was sometimes jingled, we ran for the schoolhouse. We simply had to obey in those days, and we had to be polite. We stopped at the door and ‘made our manners’ as we went in. The boys bowed or bobbed their heads and the girls dropped a courtesy — this way.” For a few minutes there was great fun trying to make the old-fashioned bow.

“You don’t bend your back at all — you just put one foot back a little and bend your knees. I can do that,” said Phœbe, jumping back on the lounge.

“When we left at night, we turned at the door, ‘made our manners,’ and said ‘Good afternoon.’ If we saw the minister coming, when we were out at play, we had to line up quickly and ‘make our manners’ to him. Sometimes we would hear him say as he passed, ‘Nice boys, nice girls.’ I am afraid old people

to-day don't always feel like saying that when they pass a crowd of youngsters."

Phoebe shook her head. "A crowd of boys is awfully naughty!"

"Would you like to know just how the old schoolhouse looked inside?" Grandma was seeing things far away.

Two voices answered, one from the kitchen and one from the couch, "Indeed we would." Grandma had been busy all the morning. Nobody in the house wanted her to work hard, and "somebody else" besides Phoebe was always ready to say the word that would lead Grandma on and on in these happy talks.

"There was an entry," she said, beginning at the beginning, "but we didn't leave our bonnets and things there. We hung them on pegs all around the schoolroom. A big fireplace was near the door, and the teacher's desk was near the fireplace, so he was always warm — but the children in the corners often

cried with the cold." Grandma explained how the parents furnished the wood for the fire, the amount that each family gave depending upon the number of children it sent to school, and how if any families failed to furnish wood, their children were put in the coldest part of the room. The big boys, of course, cared for the fire and took turns 'week about,' building it mornings. Grandma stopped and taught Phoebe the old rhyme that every child knew and followed in those days. Here was her "receipt for fire building":—

"First a fore-stick, then a back-stick,
And then a stick behind,
A middle-stick, a top-stick,
And then a stick of pine."

"The schoolroom —" somebody merrily prompted.

Grandma went on, "The children sat around the outside of the room, with their backs toward the center. They had no desks, but

a long counter ran around the room next to the wall, and the children sat at this and studied. They had no chairs or stools to sit on. A long bench made out of rough slabs was considered good enough for a school-house, and this bench the pupils must hop over every time they came out on the floor."

Phœbe brightened up. This was a nice arrangement — and the story was interrupted long enough to find out whether Grandma hopped with one foot or two feet.

That point in gymnastics settled, Grandma gave "the day's order" in the old school. "The first thing we did in the morning was to sit very still and listen to the first class as it read from the New Testament. The teacher read a verse, and then each pupil, in turn, read one."

"Did you sing?"

"Not then."

"I don't suppose you said 'Our Father, we

thank you,' ” — Phoebe was no longer certain of anything.

“No, no; sometimes, though, we had a teacher who prayed. The reading classes came next, and I loved to listen as they read from the old English Reader. My favorite pieces were ‘Lady Jane Gray’ and ‘Pythias and Damon.’ The book had lots of advice in it that we couldn’t possibly understand.” Grandma shook her head at somebody who stood in the door — “Think of children reading about ‘Exalted Society and the Renewal of Virtuous Connexions, Two Sources of Future Felicity’ !”

“Huh !” said Phoebe, “it sounds like the minister. But the little bits of children — they read about ‘cat,’ didn’t they ?”

“We didn’t read about ‘cat’ until a long time after I began to go to school, and then it was a fable about ‘The Cat and the Rat.’ I learned to read in Webster’s Spelling Book. No, there were no pictures, such as you have,

no poems about Hiawatha, nor stories about Santa Claus, nor even about 'cat.' The first reading lesson was little syllables of two letters, like this:—

“‘B-a, ba; b-e, be; b-i, bi; b-o, bo; b-u, bu;
b-y, by —

Ba, be, bi, bo, bu, by.

C-a, ca; c-e, ce; c-i, ci; c-o, co; c-u, cu;
c-y, cy —

Ca, ce, ci, co, cu, cy.’”

“I like it,” said Phoebe. “Hear me count out,” and she repeated, “Ena, mena, mina, mo!”

“Just about as sensible, perhaps, but that was *our* way of learning the sound of ‘buh, buh, buh’ in words. Now I will tell you some fine stories from the old ‘blue-back,’ as the blue-covered book was called,” and Grandma told the stories about ‘The Country Maid and her Milk Pail,’ ‘Old Dog Tray,’ and another never-to-be-forgotten one, ‘The Boy that stole the Apples’ — stories that generations

of children read and profited by, and that no one doubted would be read for all time. Some things might change — Grandma repeated the old rhyme : —

“Everything is changed in name if not in look,
Excepting time, the Testament, and Webster’s
Spelling Book !”

“True no longer,” she said ; “the old ‘blue-back’ has had its day. Little children learned their letters from it, if they hadn’t learned them before they came to school. The teacher called them to him one at a time and pointed to each letter, asking, ‘What’s this?’ They learned A, B, C, easily enough, straight I, round O, crooked S, and Q, with a tail to it, just as you do to-day, and then the other letters they couldn’t remember so well, and many a time the teacher’s rod has whistled around the ears, ‘as it beat in the A, B, C.’”

Phœbe looked troubled. “Are you quite sure that teachers never, never do so now?” she asked.

"Quite sure," said Grandma; "nobody cares to-day about beating in the letters, so you needn't worry."

"It was queer, though," said Grandma to herself, "how people loved music and poetry in those days. Why, arithmetic, geography, and grammar were made into rhyme and set to music. We sang everything, and now, when I want to remember something that I learned at school, I have only to think how the song went."

"Sing 'Kill-a-many-P,' Grandma, and I'll try to 'member."

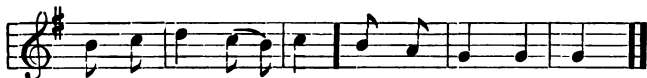
Grandma sang the alphabet, one line of which ended with K, L, M, N, O, P:—



"We sang the multiplication table to a tune that you never heard," and Grandma sang in a sweet, true voice another of those quaint, unending tunes:—



Two times one are two ; Two times two are four ;



Two times three are six ; Two times four are eight.

“Just before recess in the afternoon, we all sang at the tops of our voices the names of the states and their capitals. Each state and its capital was sung twice over to a sing-song tune,” and Grandma sang again : —



Maine, Au - gus - ta ; Maine, Au - gus - ta.

“I didn’t know what was meant by ‘capitals’ any more than you did once. I didn’t even know what the words were, but I sang with the rest, ‘May gnaw Gustie,’ never questioning why Gustie was gnawed. It was long after I first sung the words, that I learned that Maine was a state and Augusta, its capital city.

“Geography was a great study in those

days, and Peter Parley's Geography was a wonderful book. I can say some verses from it now, that we had to learn by heart : —

“ ‘ Animals and plants there be
Of various name and form ;
In the bosom of the sea,
All sorts of fishes swarm.

“ ‘ And now geography doth tell
Of these full many a story,
And if you learn your lesson well,
'Twill set them all before you.’

“Peter Parley knew what he was writing about,” Grandma declared. “He had crossed the ocean thirteen times, which he said was ‘a very great wonder.’ Some people cross it now every year, and it is no wonder at all. Then some people never cross it, and yet write books about every country on earth, and that seems to me the greatest wonder of all.”

“Things do seem upside down,” somebody said quietly.

Grandma went on with fresh courage.

“People talk to-day about the value there is in children’s making things — we didn’t talk much about it, but we must have had the benefit of the training, for we made almost everything we used in school. Our writing books were made out of large sheets of white paper, which we ruled ourselves, sewed together, and covered with pasteboard or coarse brown paper. Our pens were quill pens, that is, the ends of goose quills sharpened with a knife and the points used for pens. It was quite a knack to make a good pen. Just as soon as the point became worn a little, it was ‘Teacher, please mend my pen.’ Let a boy hand his pen to the teacher point first, and he got a stroke on his knuckles that made him remember. We used red ink, blue ink, and black ink — all our own make.”

Another deep sigh was heard. Red ink, blue ink, and black ink! How much little girls had in those days! “How could you make it?” was the eager inquiry.

“Easily enough,” said Grandma, but after she had told how red ink was made out of pokeberries, blue ink out of indigo, and black ink by boiling together soft maple bark and copperas, “with a little speck of sugar added to make it shiny and black,” Phoebe knew but little more of the mysterious process than she did before. “It wasn’t all fun using red and blue and black inks,” Grandma added; “one stray blot of ink meant a whipping.” Then the blotter was described — not a piece of blotting paper, but something that looked like a wooden pepperbox, with the top hollowed in and full of holes. This was filled with fine black sand, and when the ink of the writing was wet, the sand was sifted out on it and left to dry. When it was dry, the sand was shaken off carefully into the box again.

“Now the best class of all,” said Grandma, looking at the clock, “and then school will be out. The last thing was the spelling class. We had to stand up on the floor and ‘toe the



mark'; that is, we had to stand in a line, with our toes just touching a crack in the floor — not a fraction of an inch over the crack — our arms stiff. The teacher gave out the words and we spelled in loud, distinct voices, pronouncing every syllable," and Grandma spelled "Con-stan-ti-no-ple." "If one of us missed a word or failed to pronounce a syllable, moved his arms, or stepped over the mark, the one who corrected the mistake went above the pupil who made it. Every afternoon, the one at the head of the class went down to the foot, and was allowed to wear home for the night a shilling piece that had a hole through it and was hung on a string. At the close of the term, the pupil who had worn it the most times received the coin as a prize. Sometimes only a penny primer was given for a prize, but we worked just as hard for it, for it was a great honor to be the best speller."

Grandma went to the little cupboard that stood on the bureau, and took from a box a

tiny primer, about three inches long and two inches wide. Phœbe read the big letters at the top of each page and Grandma, the poetry : —

“Great A, little a, bouncing B,
The cat’s in the cupboard and she can’t see.

‘Come, pretty cat,
Come here to me!
I want to pat
You on my knee.

‘Go, naughty dog,
By barking thus,
You’ll drive away
My pretty puss.’”

Poetry was not always equal to the subject. Under “F” Grandma read, in prose, “Here is an old lady with a fan, a very comfortable thing in warm weather, if the flies bite.”

“I wish I could go to such a school,” said Phœbe, holding the little book in her hand.

Grandma had scored another victory, but

this time she threw it away. "I am glad those days are over," she said earnestly. "True, we learned to read, write, and cipher and were famous spellers, but I wouldn't have you go to some of the teachers that I went to for anything in the world."

"Were they bad teachers?" whispered Phoebe, who had two classes for things and people, the good and the bad.

"They did the best they knew how, probably, but oh, they were so cruel, cruel."

Did Grandma mean the tapping and the rapping that she had told about?

She meant a great deal more than she had told or would tell. No child should ever hear from her the tortures that were sometimes inflicted on children in the old school days. "I will tell you about some of the very tiresome things a child had to do if he did not know his lesson or could not even pronounce a word that perhaps he was too young to pronounce. He must stand under the teacher's desk, which

was high, with his back bent, or sit on a one-legged stool and balance himself, or sit on a cleat that was nailed to the legs of the teacher's desk. He was made, too, to sit on the dunce block and wear a dunce cap, and if the teacher thought he deserved it, a split stick was fastened to his nose. Sometimes he had to stoop over and touch a crack in the floor, until he was so tired he longed to rest by standing on his head." Grandma paused; she had told not the worst, but enough to prove her point.

Phoebe sidled up to Grandma: "Were you ever naughty?" she asked.

"Not very," and Grandma put her arm around the little comforter. "The first day that I went to school, I pushed and pushed a little girl, until she fell off the bench on to the floor. I was tired, I suppose, and would give no reason for what I had done, except 'cause I wanted to.'"

"Did the teacher make you sit on your head?"

"No, but little as I was, I had to sit on the floor in disgrace."

"Were you ever whipped?" asked Phœbe, with a little break in her voice.

Grandma hesitated. "Yes," she said slowly, "and by the kindest teacher I ever had, but a teacher must always keep his word. A slippery elm tree had been cut down near the school, and of course, we children chewed the bark. The teacher made a rule that any one caught chewing slippery elm in school should be whipped. I forgot one day, and just before school was out, put a little piece of the bark into my mouth. The teacher saw me do it — nobody was ever blind in those days — a teacher must see everything and punish everything. He came to the bench where I was sitting.

"'Phœbe,' he said, 'what are you chewing?'

"'I forgot, teacher,' was all I said.

"My head went down on my arm and I put

out my hand to be whipped. The darkness of that moment I never shall forget. He struck my hand only a few blows with a strap, but the fact that I had been publicly whipped left a hurt that was a long time healing. That was my first and last whipping. Never mind," said Grandma, cheerfully, "those days are over now, and I suppose the whippings did make us 'member' — and that is what we must learn to do — by some means or other, *we must learn to remember.*"

"I remember things, 'cause I like them," said Phoebe, opening her book again and looking at the buttercups and squirrel. "I'll study my lesson. If I remember 'have' and 'some,' won't Miss Mary smile? and she'll put a star after my name on the blackboard, and Papa will say," and Phoebe flourished her hand, "'Well done, my fellow-compatriot.'"

"Ah, yes," said Grandma, "times are different."

“And not entirely wrongside up,” said somebody appearing in the door — “Time for recess now,” and a plate of hard sugar cookies was passed, that were just as good, Grandma declared, as any she ever ate in her life.





VII

THE CREEK

IT was almost sleepy time now, and, at Grandma's only, sleepy time meant story time. Phoebe was snug in bed and Grandma, at her usual post, the low, straight-backed chair by the bedside. One more story must be told and then the two comrades would part company for the night.

The sweet spring smell and the sound of the flowing river came in at the open window. Nobody spoke of them, but they brought a glad message that was felt, and presently Grandma said: "I must tell you to-night about the little creek that rippled and flowed year in and year out, and is flowing to-day, just the same, I haven't a doubt."

"That's like poetry, Grandma ; surely it is."

"Is it? Well, it's springtime, and everything and everybody make poetry of some sort. I have been thinking all day about the old meadow beyond the orchard. The 'cowslop greens' are ready to be picked — I know right where we went to find them — and the little 'blue roosters' are in the grass, too. The strawberries are in blossom — never, never was anything so good as those wild strawberries." Grandma shook her head — "No such things nowadays."

"The creek — you said the creek is there now."

"Yes, the creek was and is always there, summer and winter, twisting and turning through the meadow. It would go 'tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,' in some places, and 'gurgle, gurgle, gurgle,' in others, always running along as if in a great hurry. Its waters were as clear as crystal and looked like a streak of light in the sunshine — all except the Deep Hole.

That was smooth and dark. Jewel Weed — or Touch-me-not, we called it — grew on its bank, and we were never tired of snapping its seed pods or of plunging its leaves into the dark water and seeing them turn to silver.”

Grandma was thinking rapidly. The creek, more than any other part of the farm, had been the playground of the children, during all seasons. “There wasn’t a thing in it or on it or near it,” she said, “but meant fun for some of us at some time of the year.

“In the spring, before there was a sign of green along the bank, freshets came, and the little singing brook became a foaming torrent and I was afraid of it. But the boys loved it and ‘went to sea’ on it. They sailed down the stream on heavy planks, guiding them with long poles, until they came to an old tree that lay across the creek. Here they anchored, and their rafts were pulled back up stream. Down and then up, down and then up,” droned Grandma — “‘he who would

float down, must walk up' became a saying with us."

"Don't you sing-song me to sleep, Grandma, not for ever so long." The little Delft clock said quarter of eight.

"All right," said Grandma, "we'll have an exciting time for a minute. With the same long hickory poles, when the water was still high, we played the game of 'Stump.' We had to be daring and quick in this game and follow the leader wherever he went. He went usually where the water was deepest and the creek widest. He planted his pole in the water or on the opposite bank, and then with a flying leap, landed across the creek. We followed — back and forth, back and forth, we flew through the air, determined to do and die, if necessary, rather than be 'stumped' and — disgraced. Out on the dead tree we scrambled, and swung over the water, from a long branch, leaping now to this side of the creek and now to that. Then light as a bird,

the leader ran across a rail that had been thrown across the water. Such a simple thing to do ! but it was the simple thing that usually beat us in this game, for then we didn't half try. All the rest tripped safely over. I was halfway across, when the rail turned. Splash ! I went, and there I stood knee-deep in the water."

"Were you 'sgraced'?"

"Oh, no, not if I followed the leader. A mishap rather made a hero of one. Nothing but 'dassent' disgraced us. That word burned like a hot coal." Grandma nodded her head. Yes, the foolish "dares" of childhood had helped make brave boys and girls — she was willing to admit it — but now, times were different. However, she was not to be turned aside to-night; she was following the golden thread through the meadow. A glance at the clock and the calm face on the pillow, and she went on.

"The freshets told us that spring was com-

ing, but how slowly it seemed to come. Would the clouds ever look warm, the birds sing, and the earth grow green. There always came a day, when for the first time, a bit of green was seen in a low brown place in the meadow. Then the cry was heard, 'Skunk cabbage is up!' and our hearts were glad. The clouds that we never forgot to watch no longer looked hard and cold, the ferns uncoiled their stems, some May pinks were found under dead leaves, a bluebird was seen, and we knew that spring was here.

"Now came another play spell at the creek. As regularly as the year rolled around, we had a day for digging out great chunks of clay from the bed of the creek. If the water was too cold to wade into, we walked out on rails over it and scooped out the clay with our hands. Didn't we get dirty, though?"

The longing in Phoebe's eyes! Think of scooping out great chunks of clay with one's hands! Compared with them, what were

the little pieces that she had played with in the kindergarten?

"What did you make, Grandma?"

"Marbles, principally, and blocks."

"Oh — spheres and cubes," corrected Phoebe.

"Yes, spheres and cubes, only we didn't know them by those names — and funny little animals, too, we cut out of the clay. They were all left in the sun to dry, and they all crumbled as soon as they were dry, but that made no difference to us. We had our fun in getting the clay and making the things — and the game was ended for that year. Every good time had its day, and then something else followed just as good as the last," said Grandma, a far-off look in her eyes and her face lighted with a happy smile.

"Please tell me about all, all the games, Grandma," said a pleading voice, "and then I'll shut my peepers."

Then Grandma told about the early sum-

mer days and how the boys always had a "spell" of trying to build a dam across the creek — tried and tried and had their fun in trying, for they never succeeded. "They worked like beavers for a few days, bringing sod and stones and old timbers for building the dam, but they didn't know as much as beavers about this kind of work, or their dam wouldn't always have been a failure. For a day, the waters of the creek spread out like a lake and the boys had great fun splashing about in it. A day and a night at the longest, the water would stay shut up, and then, the next morning, the boys would get up to find that a leak had come in the dam and the waters in their swimming pool had gone out.

"Yes, I know, little mermaid, what you want to ask about. I had a spell, too, of wanting very, very much to do something that I couldn't do. I heard the boys talk about 'floating like a cork,' and it was more than I could stand. If they could float, I could, and

I saw myself bobbing up and down on the water like a cork."

There was a little laugh.

"So one evening, after the dam was built, I put on an old dress and started for the creek alone. I met George and ventured to tell him my secret — I was going down to the pool to swim like a cork. He gave one of his low, chuckling laughs and said he would go with me. I waded into the water, thinking I had only to get where it was deep, and I should float. George stood on the bank and kept saying, 'Come this way, come this way, it's better swimming.' I went his way until I reached the Deep Hole and down I went. I came up gasping and must have swum standing, paddling with my hands as a dog does with its forepaws. In this way I kept up until George could reach me and pull me out. What did he say? Well, his first words were, 'I never would have told if you had got drowned.' It was a boy's way of comfort-

ing me," said Grandma, smiling; "whatever happened — sink or swim, live or die, the highest code of honor among youngsters in those days, was *never to tell*."

There was nothing specially exciting to Phoebe in this adventure. Had she not "floated like a cork" since her baby days? She thought of the blue, rippling water of the bay down by her home, and her eyes had now the far-away look. "I love it," she said. "Water won't hurt anybody; you have only to paddle and you're all right. What was your next 'spell'?" she asked, turning quickly, lest Grandma might escape five minutes before eight.

Grandma went on dreamily. "The hazy, lazy days of September came. Goldenrod and asters were in the meadow. Yellow and brown and scarlet leaves came floating down the stream. This was the season when seed cucumbers were ripe, and a new play by the creek began for Ruth Emmie and me."

What had cucumbers to do with a new game? Was Grandma mixing things up as they were in a dream? It must be so, for now she was telling about the little docks they built along the creek and the little boats they



made out of blocks. "No gay little sail-boats in those days — only little blocks of wood, pointed at one end, those were all we had, except in the fall. Then we had the kind of boats we liked best of all — boats

made out of the big, yellow seed cucumbers."

"How?" was the wide-awake question.

And Grandma told how the fattest cucumbers of all were cut in halves lengthwise and the seeds and inside scooped out until each part would float and balance nicely in the water. Sometimes the boats were canal boats and were pulled up and down the creek, and sometimes they were sailboats, with sticks stuck up in them for masts and pieces of paper pinned on the masts for sails. Little twig dollies were the boatmen and loads and loads of stones and acorns — "I mean barrels and barrels of potatoes and apples, of course," explained Grandma, "were carried from dock to dock. Out and in, up and down, now fast and now slow, sailed the boats, the water rippling and washing against their sides in a way that delighted our hearts." Grandma's story was becoming a lullaby.

Not yet would Phœbe be lulled to sleep.

"Tell me about when they upsetted," she coaxed.

Grandma stroked the little hand. "My boat was upset once when it wasn't play," she said gently. "Ruth Emmie and I were sailing our boats, and Becky came down to the creek to clean sweet flag, as she did once a year. She worked and I played and there the trouble began. Finally she sent me to the house for another knife, and when I came back, my boat had been thrown out into the stream, and men and hay and dock were floating in all directions."

"Oh, how could she, Grandma?"

"I think I know now," said Grandma. "Becky had never been a little girl. Her life had been a hard one. She could not remember or imagine what it was to be a child. And I — not one word did I say. I helped clean the sweet flag, and not a tear fell into the brook. I knew I must work and I did, and I knew, too, that I could make another boat

and dock and that I would, as soon as the work was over. That was the way we were trained in those days.

"Right or wrong," said Grandma to herself, "youngsters had to 'grin and bear' everything. It made good soldiers of us, perhaps." Perhaps? Could there be any doubt of what some kind of training had done, or of the kind of soldiers it had made, as one looked at the strong, quiet face of the grown-up little girl of long ago?

"I'd rather be a sailor than a soldier," was the grumbling comment.

"Soldier or sailor or whatever you may be, somehow or somewhere, two lessons you must learn — one is, 'be brave and say nothing'; the other, 'obey and say nothing.' Learn these lessons, and you will be happy.

"Now one more glimpse of the creek, and then we'll leave it to go on and on forever. The days of the ripe cucumber passed, and then what came next? Winter, winter every-

where — in the air, nipping our noses, on the ground, nipping our 'tosies,' up in the sky, shaking down feathers, day after day, day after day, until the fields were covered with a snow-white blanket three feet thick. Then day after day the sun shone, little by little the snow packed. A cold night came, and one morning, we woke up to find that the crust would bear us up. In a twinkling, we were through the orchard and over the meadow, skimming and skipping, slipping and sliding, until the creek was reached. We didn't know it. It was like the face of a stranger. Drifts hung over the banks, and the water was hidden by a sheet of ice. It was so still, too, but we heard it — the same little tinkling voice — as if it were far away. We had no skates in those days, but we understood sliding perfectly. A quick, hard run of a few feet and then a long slide on the ice, another run and another slide, and in this way we traveled long distances.

“Then came the white night — a night when the moon was white, all the earth white, and Cousin Loreny made us glad again. Day after day and night after night were pretty much the same on the old farm, until Loreny came, and then there was a change. One glance from her bright eyes to-night, out on the white orchard and meadow, and a frolic was planned such as seldom came to us. It was only a slide on the creek in the moonlight, but oh, the excitement of it! The joy there was in simply getting ready, in the race across the frozen crust, and then the long, long slides on the frozen creek! I could not run fast on the ice nor slide far, alone, but to-night Peter and Loreny —”

“The two Santa Clauses,” some one murmured.

Grandma nodded — “one took one hand and the other the other hand, and I had the longest slide of my life, and they the happiest of theirs.”

Grandma laughed. She was looking out



of the window and talking to somebody on the balcony. "I didn't know, as I slid and slid, that I was the link between two bashful people, and that finally, when I was too tired to slide any longer, Peter did the bravest act of his life."

"What, Grandma?"

"He gave his hand to Loreny, and they took a long slide together."

Somebody out in the night smiled. Dear hearts of long ago! The simple taking of her hand — how much it meant in those days! How true it was, what Grandma was saying now — "If people only knew that it isn't the 'muchness' of what is said and done that makes another happy. A touch of the hand, a slide on the ice, a walk over the frozen crust, a word, perhaps, and two persons knew they were to walk together through life."

"Is that all?" a sleepy voice asked from the pillow.

"All for to-night. Good night." Two little

arms were clasped tightly around Grandma's neck, and all was quiet for a few seconds.

"You did have such good times when you were a little girl. I wish — I — had been — alive — when you — were little," were the last words. For a minute, the eyes were wide open, as if they saw meadow and orchard, wide-spreading tree and tinkling creek. Suddenly, their work done, the "peepers" closed, and a little craft drifted swiftly away to Shadowland, where Grandma's stories are lived and not told, and where they are never ended with "Good night," but always with "Good morning."



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